Louis B. Mayer Signs New Contract With Metro.

CANADIAN MOVING PICTURE DIGEST

Vol. 29, No. 34 TORONTO 2, CANADA December 11th, 1937

This bird's got a nose for news and his nose knows that the biggest surprise hit of many seasons is M-G-M's thrilling heart-throb show "NAVY BLUE AND GOLD" ← (*at the box-office!*)

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MOTION PICTURE DAILY
Monday, November 29, 1937

MOTION PICTURE DAILY'S HOLLYWOOD PREVIEW

"Beg, Borrow or Steal"

(M-G-M)

HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 28—Down New Orleans way they have a custom called "lagniappe." In the north it is known as the baker's dozen. Both mean the purchaser gets an extra doughnut or cookie In either place it is a gracious gesture. It is not recalled that any great emphasis was placed on "Beg, Borrow or Steal" in the company's annual announcement. But it seems that M-G-M has adopted the "lagniappe" practice Like "Navy Blue and Gold" and "You're Only Young Once," it is first rate, audience pleasing entertainment. Like a doughnut it is not very much, but there is a whole lot around it. As it delivered one emotion-stirring sock in the climax it had no difficulty in causing the preview crowd to smile, giggle and guffaw from opening frame to fadeout.

Based on a William White story, the screenplay by Leonard Lee, Harry Ruskin and Marion Parsonnet is a frothy, bubbling concoction of clever dialogue and intriguing situations that make sparkling character performances automatic Actors like Frank Morgan, Janet Beecher, Herman Bing, Erik Rhodes, George Givot, E E Clive, Cora Witherspoon, Reginald Denny, Vladimir Sokoloff and Harlan Briggs know exactly how to handle that type of material and the way they handle it, in this instance, leaves nothing to be desired. As this group indulges in its round of tomfoolery, Florence Rice and John Beal, the second leads in "Double Wedding," with the aid of Tom Rutherford, a newcomer, take excellent care of the romantic angle

Morgan, a gentle grafter, the pal of Bing, Rhodes, Givot, Denny and Sokoloff who prefer to live otherwise than by laboring, persuades Beal to loan him a chateau as a wedding place for his daughter, Miss Rice. The deception is carried out in grand style to the amazement of suitor Rutherford and his parents, Briggs and Miss Witherspoon. All goes well until Beal falls in love with Miss Rice and the gang refuses to believe that Clive is a real nobleman At the point where one of his shady deals and the police catch up with him, Morgan reveals his true identity to Beal. It would not be real romance did not the latter also prove to be a Prince Charming to take Miss Rice into his arms after Miss Rutherford, Briggs and Miss Witherspoon depart homeward

Showmen have a show here that they can present to their patrons with the full confidence that it will meet with their approval If "Beg, Borrow or Steal" is anything but a class A attraction the alphabet is all wrong. Producer Frederick Stephani and Director William Thiele here have given a conclusive demonstration that only a good story, capable players and the application of a little common sense are necessary to make a good film, high in entertainment and commercial value.

"Running time, 72 minutes. "G."

"You're Only Young Once"

(M-G-M)

HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 28.—This unostentatious production is pointed straight at the great middle class which still pays most of the nation's taxes and does practically all of its voting. It strikes the common people, the number of which the Great Emancipator is said to have commented upon eloquently, right where they live—in their homes, hopes, ideals and emotions. If this preponderant majority of the population has undergone no vital change since compilation of last week's grosses there can be little question that the film will give an excellent box-office account of itself, more than possibly embarrassing most of the costlier productions alongside which it may be programmed

The central character, a small town judge, is played by Lewis Stone in a manner arguing long and prosperous employment for the widely beloved veteran if this turns out, as expected, to be the first of a series built around the affairs of the Hardy family, plain people Fay Holden plays the wife, Mickey Rooney and Cecilia Parker, the adolescent children, and Sara Haden, their aunt. The screenplay, by Kay Van Riper, using characters accredited to Aurania Rouverol, takes the family from a small town somewhere in mid-America to Catalina Island on vacation. At that place both youngsters incur romantic attachments of dubious promise and are rescued, so to speak, by their father's common sense counsel. Later, he extricates himself from a financial difficulty

As directed by George B Seitz and played by those named, plus Eleanor Lynn, Frank Craven, Ann Rutherford and others, "You're Only Young Once" moves smoothly along from plausible cause to logical effect, employing situations, dialogue and relationships snugly within the experience of perhaps 80 per cent of the 90,000,000 Americans who, unless the figure be down a bit just now, attend picture shows weekly. It's a pretty fine piece of plain bread-and-butter product.

Running time, 76 minutes. "G."

GOLDWYN-KORDA-U.A. DEAL OFF.

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RAY LEWIS
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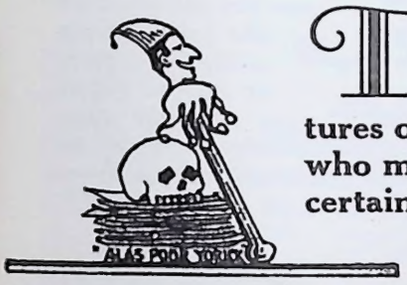
THE YEAR'S TEN BEST



THERE will shortly be published lists of the Ten Best pictures of the year; and those who make the selection will certainly find themselves in deep waters, for this year has certainly been an outstanding year for productions containing quality sufficient to give these pictures a place among the classics.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Warner Bros., RKO Radio, 20th Century - Fox, Columbia, United Artists, Universal, all have contributed, not one, but several pictures worthy to take their place among the year's Ten Best.

While laughter has been the new vogue, the serious, and mighty epic with its combination of the biographical and historical has been dominant; and has given us pictures we cannot forget.

The English market has come into this year's reign of glory with pictures from Korda and Herbert Wilcox.

We are particularly referring to Quality pictures, which had a box-office appeal in addition to their unique merit, and are not taking into consideration the pictures which made money today, but will be forgotten, save by the box-office, in our big pictures conversations of tomorrow.

No one has yet been able to determine what makes an ordinary picture a big picture, because it has a phenomenal run, or tops the receipts of better-made pictures. Veterans of our film trade have wrestled with this angle, but the only answer is this one, "The public like it, they come to see it, not once, but twice, they talk about it, therefore, it's a good picture".

Is this a logical summing up, is it an infallible conclusion? Some of the masterpieces of musical composition, of painting, of sculpture remained unknown, until a market was created for the artist, by a trader who knew only market values, and whose knowledge of the Art of what he was trading, was limited.

The public who buy masterpieces, buy the market value of a name. A few people buy for merit or quality, regardless of market value, but the few who buy for merit or quality value will not pay as much for what they are getting, as those people pay for similar merit or quality which has a market value.

Trademarks are unquestionably important, there is a lot, a tremendous lot in a name; and the success of one picture helps its follower, in fact, there was never a good picture released which did not help to get the benefit of favorable public reaction for other pictures, and the poor ones react similarly, but have a destructive instead of constructive effect.

Does it pay to make the big ones? Ask the trademarks who make them. M-G-M has always paid a big dividend, other trademarks are showing profits which clearly indicate dividends are coming; and, since the producer-distributor cannot in this day of percentage-playing make millions without the exhibitors taking their share, let us hope that the "Fear" scare is now over, and "Happy Days Are Here Again".

RAY

RAY LEWIS

PRESENTS

SOMEONE said that "comparisons are always odious"; I do not agree with the originator of that expression, because most of our judgments are based on comparisons.

A comparison of experiences, in order to determine the best move at the present by way of action, a comparison of quality to determine selection or choice when buying, a comparison by way of determining which of two, or more offerings, or characterizations is the better to the critic who is making the comparison.

There is nothing odious about such a method, the odious angle may attach itself to that person who rates second by way of comparison, or the product which falls into second place.

This is all apropos of "Victoria The Great", the RKO Radio-Herbert Wilcox picture starring Anna Neagle and Anton Walbrook.

Following closely on the premiere of "Victoria The Great", came the stage presentation, "Victoria Regina", with Helen Hayes.

Those who saw the play must have thoroughly enjoyed Helen Hayes as "Victoria" but seeing the picture first, with all the episodes and incidents which make "Victoria The Great" a cavalcade of historical characterizations and events, the stage show lost by comparison.

Helen Hayes is a magnificent artist, and her artistry was at its best as "Queen Victoria"; what handicaps she had were centralized in the limited scope of the stage-show in comparison with the boundless territory which the screen can encompass.

IN the United States those scenes which stressed the alleged illegitimacy of Prince Albert were hugely enjoyed. As a Britisher I found that these scenes irritated me, they appeared to be unnecessarily played upon, "lugged in", as it were, in order to spice up a "Victorian characterization and period", to split the ears of the groundlings.

The English version of the same stage play has been presented with all such reference eliminated, and the London show is a success.

The screen play, "Victoria The Great" is free from all such suggestiveness. Mr. Wilcox, its producer, Charles De Grandcourt, its author, and Anna Neagle informed me that during more than two years of research work,, covering contemporary works of that period, the personal diaries of Queen Victoria, newspaper comments and historical references in periodicals, there was nothing to be found to suggest that Prince Albert and Prince Ernest (his older brother) were not the sons of the same father and mother.

It is pleasant to note that in the United States the screen version (without the taint) is enjoying a substantial success, and that the great tributes accorded this picture by the press are getting an equal public response at the box-office.

I think it is a feather in our motion picture cap; we go clean, and clean-up over the stage-show, which depended on the sly smirks of the suggested taint to make the public come to see Helen Hayes' magnificent work as "Victoria".

I HAVE already told you what I think of Anna Neagle's "Victoria", although I admit that Helen Hayes in the American stage play and Pamela Stanley in the London stage show, need not fear that any comparison might be odious.

In Toronto, the ladies and gentlemen will remember Anna Neagle for her gracious receptivity to their hospitality.

In Toronto, Helen Hayes will be remembered for her characterization. She has been quoted as not being favorably disposed to the Screen, but I believe that is due to the fact that Helen Hayes is not a "public personality". She was not particularly cheerful about being entertained.

I was interested, not surprised, in listening to the RCA Magic Key radio program to have the announcer extol the virtues of its service and Television. Is this a shadow of a coming event, or is it Television in person?

Toronto has been doing some premature "house-cleaning". Gambling machines and burlesque appear to be the mote in the right eye of the "cleaners". The Casino on Queen Street appears to be the only show left in Toronto with " a girl presentation", the other two houses are presenting pictures exclusively. A rabbi, and a welfare council aided by a mayor, were instrumental in stripping the two theatres of their "strip-show".

During a recent trip to the French Casino, New York, since closed, I saw one of the worst shows for quality that I had ever seen there; it was "full of clothes", and the last straw, which drove me to drink, was a female slave, colored, attached to a chariot, being switched by her driver, the said female slave all dressed up in

(Continued on Page 5)

Joseph P. Kennedy Rumoured As Next U.S. Ambassador To England.

RAY PRESENTS

(*Continued from Page 4*)

a brown union-suit, reaching from her brown neck to her toes. No wonder the place went bankrupt. Here was a case not applicable to "In UNION there is strength".

WARNER BROS.' "First Lady" with Kay Francis is excellent material, and should be among those pictures of Big Returns. I saw Jane Cowl in the stage production, and I am looking forward to Warner Bros.' release of "First Lady" in Canada. During the stage run, it was amusing to listen to running comments made by the audience. They told each other what this and that character represented in Washington politics. The asides in the audience were as amusing as the play.

In the new New Universal set-up we note, that Mr. Nate J. Blumberg, who succeeds Mr. R. H. Cochrane as president, is the general manager of RKO Theatre operation.

William J. Scully, who succeeds James R. (Jimmy) Grainger, is Eastern District Manager for M-G-M.

John J. O'Connor, who has been buying film for the RKO circuit in the U.S., is rumoured as a successor with RKO to take Mr. Blumberg's place.

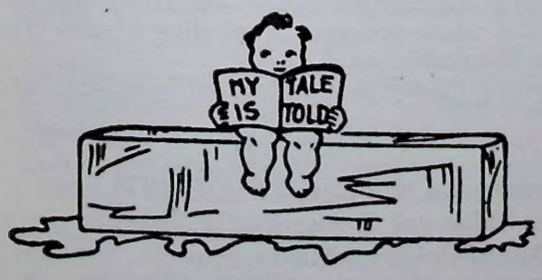
In the Universal change of set-up, following a meeting of the board, Mr. R. H. Cochrane, the president of New Universal, was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee, but did not say he would accept this compromise which deprived him of presidency.

J. CHEEVER COWDIN, whose Interests on March 14th, 1936, purchased the control of the company through a purchase of Carl Laemmle's shares for $5,500,000, ratified a five year contract which Mr. Blumberg was tendered, as president. Matthew Fox, of the Skouras Theatres, will act as assistant to the president when Mr. Blumberg officially takes up his position as Universal president.

The Empire-Universal tie-up for Canada, in which Mr. N. L. Nathanson played a leading part is already past history in Canada.

I understand that when "N. L." was considering the deal, Clair Hague, the former general manager of Canadian Universal, was mentioned, and the deal included Clair Hague as a Universal representative in Canada.

There are rumours of possible legal action because of the new set-up of Universal, but I think they are rumours. Mr. R. H. Cochrane has always been an important executive in our Industry, and never a "conspicuous one".



CONKLIN IN WINNIPEG

BY J. J. CONKLIN

FOURTEEN pickets, members of the International Alliance of Theatre and Stage Employees, were acquitted of intimidation charges in connection with a union squabble at the Park Theatre, Winnipeg, in October in a lengthy judgment handed down by Magistrate R. B. Graham in the Winnipeg court, November 23.

In decision, Magistrate Graham said, "If ever picketing was peaceable, in the ordinary meaning of the word, then this picketing was . . . I find as a fact that the purpose of the accused was merely to communicate information . . . I find as a fact that no crowd collected until after the arrival of representatives of the O.B.U., who removed the placards from the persons of the pickets, who made no resistance. If any nuisance or inconvenience to the public was caused, it was caused by the actions of these representatives of the O.B.U."

Two of the O.B.U. men referred to were convicted of common assault in court November 20.

The assault charges were laid by the International union some time ago after the O.B.U. stripped pickets of their placards while they were on duty near the Park Theatre.

In summing up, the judgment said: "The case is somewhat different from the usual trade union dispute. There is no dispute between employer and employees concerning wages, hours of labor, working conditions or collective bargaining. The quarrel here seems to be between two antagonistic labor organizations". The One Big Union is a Canadian organization with headquarters in Winnipeg.

Charges against the men were preferred by Rudolph Besler, proprietor of the Park Theatre, which was picketed for three successive nights in October.

The picketing, the evidence had shown, resulted when Besler, after entering into a contract with a local of the One Big Union, made a change in his projectionist, employing a member of that union.

Mr. Besler, it was shown, had entered into the contract with the O.B.U. after he had been notified that his contract with the All Canadian Congress of Labor would terminate September 1.

Consequently, on signing the new contract, he replaced the projectionist working for him under the A.C.C.L. contract with an operator from the O.B.U.

* * *

Film Revivals For Winnipeg Capitol

ALWAYS energetic, Harold Bishop, Manager of the Winnipeg Capitol is planning an innovation for that house which will probably take effect next week. Every Thursday there will be an extra midnight showing of a famous revival picture, the choice of picture being determined by the preference of Capitol patrons, as expressed on ballots. Patrons will vote for the revival picture they would like to see, and as soon os the Capitol can get it, the picture asked for will be shown at one of the Thursday late shows.

See Next Week's "Digest" For Announcement Of Associated Theatres' General Expansion Program.

DIGEST REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS

"SUBMARINE D-1"

WARNER BROTHERS

"Jay L."

THIS latest service picture from the Warner Bros. studios is a worthy addition to such hits as "Here Comes the Navy", "Devil Dogs of the Air", etc., etc. Pat O'Brien, who, we believe, has been in every one of the service films made by Warner Bros. — excluding, of course, the musicals in which Dick Powell starred — is one of the three principals in this, but as his belligerent foil, he now has Wayne Morris, in the type of role made famous by James "Jimmy" Cagney. George Brent completes the trio of stars, and although incidental to the main theme, adds one more selling angle that cannot be disregarded. The girl in the case, for whose favor Pat O'Brien and Wayne Morris are rivals, is Doris Weston, previously seen in "The Singing Marine". Wayne Morris, you will recall, is the lad who soared to fame for his grand performance in "Kid Galahad".

As the title intimates, "Submarine D-1" is a story of the underseas arm of the U.S. Navy, and a more thrilling or exciting branch of the services we cannot imagine, unless it is the flying arm. Picture contains two underwater crashes, in one of which all hands are lost, and in the second all hands are saved, the last men by means of a rescue chamber invented by George Brent and Pat O'Brien. Frank McHugh supplies most of the comedy, and the scene where he is forced to abandon a winning sweepstake ticket in order to save himself from drowning, is a riot. Dennie Moore as McHugh's gold-digging sweetie is also good for several laughs. Story follows the evolution of Wayne Morris, from a cocky, useless gob, to one of the more valuable and responsible members of the Navy. In the end, of course, he wins the girl, and poor Pat O'Brien, as usual, is left holding the well-known bag.

ACTING of the whole cast is uniformly good, with Wayne Morris showing conclusively that "Kid Galahad" was no accident, and that he really has something on the ball. With the proper handling, Morris should become one of Warners' leading money-makers. George Brent and Pat O'Brien do all that is asked of them, and Doris Weston, who has nothing to do but look beautiful, performs right nobly. Frank McHugh, Ronald Reagan, Henry O'Neill, Veda Ann Borg, Regis Toomey, Broderick Crawford (son of Helen Broderick), Owen King and Jerry Fletcher all add their characterizations to the fine work of the principals, and to the general entertainment of the picture.

I was particularly interested in the technical aspects of the picture, as I imagine most of the men and many of the women, will be. The thrilling shots of the war-games will keep you glued to your seats with excitement, and the details of the rescue from the sub, will also make the red blood in your veins, tingle. This technical aspect of the production, is superior to any of the other service films, and great credit is due Commander G. W. D. Dashiells, who acted as technical advisor, and Director Lloyd Bacon, for making these scenes so convincing.

"Submarine D-1" is definitely Box-Office, and the exhibitors should take the time and energy necessary to evolve a bang-up selling campaign, for all those who see the picture will be more than satisfied with the entertainment provided. See to it, that they don't miss it!

Wayne Morris, Doris Weston and Pat O'Brien in a scene from the Warner Bros. production, "Submarine D-1".

* * *

DIGEST RADIO REVIEWS

Programme—FLEISCHMAN YEAST HOUR
Sponsor—General Foods.
Star—Rudy Vallee and Orchestra, with guest stars.
Time—8.00-9.00 P.M., EST. Thursday, Dec. 2. NBC.

BACK in New York after a sojourn in the Film capital, Rudy Vallee presented his usual variety program last Thursday. Show featured five "acts", besides regular vocal and instrumental numbers by Rudy and the band. Frank Case, manager of Gotham's Algonquin Hotel, was in there for a supposed comedy contribution, but which fell very flat on this listener's ears. Three members of Dublin's famous Abbey Players contributed a one act play, that contained much that was rich in humour and human interest. Kay Thompson and her trio of boys from Ed Wynn's new show, "Hooray For What" offered a couple of vocal swing numbers that were easy on the ears, and the irrepresible Betty Lou and her friend Tommy Riggs added their bit to the general fun. In case you don't know it, Betty Lou is Charlie McCarthy's girl-friend, at least she is one of his own class, in other words a dummy, with Tommy doing the Bergen act. Lou Holtz was the best feature on the whole program, exploding a salvo of laughs in his own inimitable way.

Concensus—Spotty, but redeemed by Lou Holtz.

* * *

Programme—GOOD NEWS OF 1938.
Sponsor—Maxwell House Coffee.
Star—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios.
Time—9.00-10.00 P.M., EST. Thursday, Dec. 2. NBC.

Atlas Corp. Reported Seeking Clarence Brown, M-G-M Director, As RKO Studio Head.

DIGEST REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS

LAST week we mentioned that the M-G-M-Maxwell House show that week was an improvement on the previous weeks' efforts, and this week we are happy to report that the show is improving each week; with this last programme, it has become first class entertainment. Allan Jones was again "emcee", and as his guests he had Fanny Brice, Freddie Bartholomew, Herman Bing, Cora Witherspoon, Frank Morgan, the latter three from the cast of "Beg, Borrow or Steal", Betty Jaynes, Judy Garland and Wallace Beery.

Freddie Bartholomew turned in a grand job of troup-ing, doing interviews with the various celebrities, and playing scenes with Wallace Berry from the latter's great hit picture, "The Champ". Betty Jaynes, whom we learn will have the lead in "The Student Prince", sang "My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown", and Fanny Brice did another Baby Snookums.

Concensus—Better direction, resulting in absence of any draginess. Best yet of the series.

* * *

Programme—LUX RADIO THEATRE.
Sponsor—Lux Soap.
Star—Cecil B. DeMille directing radio play.
Time—9.00-10.00 P.M., EST. Monday, Dec. 6. CBS.

AN all star cast headed by such capable artists as Barbara Stanwyck, Errol Flynn, Mary Astor, Constance Collier, Marcia Mae Jones and many others, in one of the screen and stage's outstanding successes, "These Three". Performance of the whole cast was excellent, and the script was a great improvement over that of the previous week. Enjoyed this radio play thoroughly, but the commercials still make me feel nauseated. Even the Abbey children's "plug" offended my stomach nerves.

Concensus—Play itself excellent, performers tops, but advertising still very, very crude.

PERSONAL MUSINGS

VISITORS in town this week included the Temple Brothers of the Island Park Theatre, Port Carling; Jack Walker of the Gem Theatre, Port Dover; Jack Campbell of the Royal, Parry Sound and Sammy Fardella of the Grand, Fergus, Ont. Returned from an extended visit to the West, was Izzy Allen of Empire-Universal.

* * *

WALTER KENNEDY, formerly salesman with Empire Films, has been appointed Exploitation Manager for Empire-Universal, in charge of the special feature, "Cloistered", which is being released by that company.

I might also mention that those five Universal hits which were advertised in last week's issue of The Digest, namely, "Merry-Go-Round of 1938", "Mad About Music", "You're a Sweetheart", "The Rage of Paris", and the still untitled production by John M. Stahl, will be released in Canada by Empire-Universal.

* * *

I STAND corrected re the marquee sign of the new Elgin Theatre in Ottawa. I am told that it was not the offspring of Claude-Neon-Macey, as there is no longer any such company, but a Neon sign, manufactured by the E. L. Ruddy Co. of Toronto. Darn it all, and it was such a good pun.

WORD reaches us that Red Kann, who has been editor of the Motion Picture Daily for almost as many years as we have been alive, is severing his connection with that paper to become editor-in-chief of "Box-Office", and associate of Ben Shylen, this change to become effective January 3rd, 1928.

Red's many friends in the Motion Picture Industry will be sorry to lose his gentle words of wisdom as they appeared in the Motion Picture Daily, but what is that paper's definite loss, is equally definitely "Box-Office's" gain. At any rate, the best wishes of The Digest go with Mr. Kann in his new venture.

* * *

PATHE NEWS, the most venerable of newsreels, which was THE newsreel of the day when we wore diapers, is rapidly gaining its old prestige through its present RKO Radio release. A glimpse of the subjects covered by the Pathe rooster, gives you the idea that there is very little in the way of news that Pathe has failed to cover.

The subjects seen in the current issue are as follows: President Roosevelt coming ashore at Miami, Fla., after a fishing cruise, and back to the White House and the dentist's chair; RKO-Pathe News, in an exclusive feature, lends G-Men a hand by flashing Rogues' Gallery portraits of three hunted men in the million-dollar drug ring; San Francisco power companies drill the biggest tunnel in the Western World through the Sierra Nevadas; former President Herbert Hoover visits Flushing Meadows, N.Y., where the 1939 World's Fair is rising out of a swamp; ski champs get the jump on old man Winter by taking off among the rafters of the Boston Garden, highest indoor jump in the world; William Green of the A.F. of L., and John L. Lewis, head of the C.I.O. meet; fliers thrill at Miami, Fla.; Washington Redskins professional football team beat New York Giants before 60,000 fans.

A rather complete newsreel, if you ask us!

"Jay F."

Wayne Morris and George Brent, starred with Pat O'Brien in Warner Bros.' "Submarine D-1".

See Next Week's "Digest" For Announcement Of Associated Theatres' General Expansion Program.

WASHINGTON FILM DIGEST

BY GEORGE W. MEHRTENS

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 6—(CTP)

KEEN interest in copyright legislation was revived here this week when Senator F. Ryan Duffy, in a special interview with Canadian Moving Picture Digest, revealed that it was "high time the copyright situation came out into the open", and indicated it was his intention to get up a discharge petition in the Lower House and take the matter out of the hands of Congressman William I. Sirovich's Patents Committee.

Apparently spurred on by the recent favorable report given the International Copyright Convention bill by the Senate Committee this week, Duffy disclosed that he would use any and all means to effect action on his regular bill, shortly after the opening of the regular session.

Committee members and others in the Lower House have expressed an attitude of rebellion against Sirovich's apparent intention to shelve the matter in the Patents Committee, it was pointed out. It is understood the strategy would be to get a Congressman, probably Braswell Dean of Georgia, to introduce the companion measure to the Duffy bill in the House. Dean, it is believed, would have the solid support of the Southern Representatives to join Duffy's already strong forces in the West and Mid-West.

Now that the Senate Committee has passed favorably on the International Copyright Convention," Duffy said, "there will be a necessity for domestic legislation. I hope to get the treaty bill before the Senate immediately after we finish with the anti-lynching bill this session. My regular bill will, of course, have to wait until the regular session but I can lay the ground work for it now."

The rebellious attitude expressed in the House, it was pointed out, is due largely because Sirovich as chairman of the Patents Committee has failed to call hearing on the copyright matters for two sessions.

When questioned on the matter here this week Congressman Braswell Dean declared that he was in sympathy with the Duffy measure and that it would receive his complete support in the House. The measure might still have to be revised since it is the belief of many that it is too broad.

When reached for a personal statement, Congressman Sirovich told Canadian Moving Picture Digest he didn't care what Senator Duffy proposed to do.

"It is the Senator's privilege to do as he pleases," Sirovich said, "I don't see any clamoring for copyright legislation from the composers and authors who do the work. It is only a cry from those who exploit their works who have formed a lobby in an effort to get a cut out of the works of these people."

"The River" Follows "The Plow"

THE public premiere of "The River", latest Farm Security Administration movie, will take place in the Capital City this week. Successor to the widely acclaimed "Plow That Broke the Plains", the new vehicle pictures economic and agricultural phases of the Mississippi River. It was previously shown in five Mississippi Valley cities. The premiere this week will be presented to an invited audience composed of Senators, Congressmen, Diplomats, and Capital City Society folk.

Distribution of the film to movie houses will be the same as with "The Plow" with the government supplying the reel free of charge. The houses booking the film will have to pay only transportation charges. The film was writen and directed by Pare Lorenz and the musical score is composed by Virgil Thompson.

Climax Jurisdictional Battle

CLIMAXING the bitter jurisdictional battle to determine the proper bargaining agency for the organization, representatives of the Screen Writers Guild and the Screen Playwrights armed with a mass of testimony, records and previous judicial decisions, argued their respective cases before the National Labor Relations Board last week.

Practically the climax of a series of cases heard on the West Coast for the past several months, the battle centers around the Screen Writers' attempt to seek representation in any negotiations with the producers, notwithstanding the fact that the Screen Playwrights have already closed a contract which gives that body official recognition as bargaining agent for the screen writing profession.

In presenting the case on behalf of the Screen Writers Guild before the board, Leonard Janofsky opening the brief five-hour hearing session, repeatedly urged that the Association of Motion Picture Producers Incorporated would be the proper bargaining unit and stated that any corporation not a member must bargain separately. Janofsky stated that Screen Writers were definitely employees and as such were entitled under the Wagner Act to the right to bargain collectively.

Niel S. McCarthy, representing the Screen Playwrights, opposed Janofsky on all points declaring that Screen writers were not employees of the Producers and should not be entitled to a bargaining agency since in his opinion they had nothing to bargain for. Screen writers McCarthy said, were receiving ample incomes from the Producers and in a good many cases were doing nothing for it.

Major Walter T. Tuller representing Paramount, questioned the Board's power to designate a bargaining agency for the writers. If the Wagner Act can be interpreted to give this board such power, Tuller said, then the government has placed the labor responsibility of the entire nation upon the shoulders of three men.

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EVERYTHING FOR THE THEATRE FROM SHEET TO STREET

Warners' "Perfect Specimen" Outgrosses "Anthony Adverse" and "Certain Woman" Ottawa and Vancouver.

LONDON ROUNDABOUT

BY DENNISON THORNTON

Magnificent Gesture

HERE is an amazing inside story of a film star who is playing Santa Claus to nearly four hundred workers in a British studio.

For a long time it was kept secret. (I don't know why).

But now it can be told.

The film star hero of this tale is Arthur Tracy, The Street Singer.

And here are the facts:

Recently, a new company scheduled production at Pinewood of a picture called "Follow Your Star", starring Arthur Tracy.

On the day shooting was to have commenced something went wrong.

There was tension and anxiety when employees were warned that filming might never begin.

No explanation was given as to what had happened.

Now the truth has been disclosed.

BECAUSE of the precarious state of the film industry generally, and the fact that the future of British films rests largely with Parliament, the financial brokers of the company considered it advisable to postpone production until a later date.

The producers hurriedly called a conference.

As Arthur Tracy had to return to the United States on December 18 to fulfill radio, stage and screen contracts there, they realised it would be impossible for him to stay on and complete the film later.

It was agreed nothing could be done. Production would have to be abandoned.

They informed Arthur Tracy.

Mr. Tracy did some quick thinking.

He knew that work was scarce these days in British films; that cessation of production would mean that hundreds of studio workers directly and indirectly connected with the picture would be thrown out of employment during the Christmas season.

"Something," he said, "must be done."

Something was done.

WITHIN an hour, transatlantic cables were buzzing between Tracy and his New York business representatives. He also telephoned friends there asking them to help him raise the necessary finance.

A few hours later Tracy had succeeded in placing almost unlimited resources at the disposal of the company.

Next day production began. Everybody was happy. But none of the employees knew the truth about what had happened.

"But for Mr. Tracy's wonderful action," said a studio executive, "production could never have proceeded.

"He didn't have to do what he did. Most people in his position wouldn't have done it.

"As a matter of fact he never even told the producers of his plan until he was almost sure it would succeed.

"The production staff had been told it might be necessary to stop the picture. The news cast a gloom over the entire studio.

"When Mr. Tracy saw how much the film meant to everybody, especially with Christmas coming on, he decided to take matters into his own hands.

"It was a grand gesture."

Richman Speaks

"DON'T get me wrong," said Mr. Richman. "British films have a long way to go — but they'll get there yet."

Harry Richman, stage and screen star, composer, night-club owner and entertainer, and Atlantic flier, talked to me at the luxurious club attached to the Pinewood studios, where he is making his first British picture, "Kicking the Moon Around".

Picture is being made by an independent company, Vogue Films, at a cost of £80,000. And that's money in anybody's language.

The director is Walter Forde (who made "Rome Express" and "Chu Chin Chow") and the stars (Richman apart) are Ambrose and his band, Florence Desmond and Evelyn Dall.

Mr. Richman moves in expensive company . . . .

"The trouble with British pictures," said Mr. Richman, "are the stories and scenarios — especially the latter. They're lousy.

"Your producers don't appear to realise the importance of a good shooting-script. The script is the picture's foundation. And everybody knows what happens when you build a house on sand.

"I've seen British films with good, original story-ideas behind them. And yet they've been terrible — just because they've been messed up by writers who don't know their job.

"What you need over here is a school for scenario writers — with men like Nunally Johnston and Robert Riskin as the instructors.

"ANOTHER thing. British pictures could do with a bit of showmanship. With the exception of Korda and Wilcox you've got no showmen on the production side here.

"Why, I've met executives in your studios who do nothing but talk disparagingly about British pictures. They talk the same way about pictures made by their own companies.

" 'We can't make films in this country,' they moan.

" 'We can't compete against Hollywood,' they groan.

"Say, what kind of attitude is this? It's defeatist, that's what it is. You can't sell your own product if you don't believe in it. That's elementary salesmanship.

"And who wants to compete against Hollywood anyway? Let British producers concentrate on a few quality pictures a year. They'll find it pays."

IN "Kicking the Moon Around", Mr. Richman plays a part he plays in everyday life. He is a night-club owner and entertainer.

"What sold me the idea of making the picture," he said, "were the songs. They're terrific.

"What are my plans? When I finish this film I am going home to prepare for my long-distance flight from Toronto to Rio de Janeiro.

"Right now I'm more interested in that than in anything else in the world."

See Next Week's "Digest" For Announcement Of Associated Theatres' General Expansion Program.

BRITISH FILM DIGEST

BY WARD SHAFTESBURY

LAST week, John Maxwell struck a strong blow for Reciprocity. In face of the implacable opposition of the Trade Unions, this noted czar of British Films came out forcibly in favour of the principle of reciprocal agreements as the chief hope of the Industry. After over 200 amendments have been added to the Films Bill, the British Governmnet is still at its wits' end and in an apparently vain attempt to give the Film Industry what it wants in the way of legislated protection. Now, Maxwell has swung his whole weight behind the movement for mutual film trading between England and its greatest Films rival, the United States — and in so doing he has cut himself off completely from that large body of the trade which is agitating for Separate Quotas and is distinctly opposed to Reciprocity.

Maxwell finds his solution to the problem in a rather civilized method of barter. For him, the American renters should be offered the opportunity of buying the right of distribution in the U.S.A. of any British picture. If they avail themselves of this opportunity they should be given exemption from the necessity (according to Quota statutes) of acquiring British pictures for distribution in England. Mr. Maxwell suggests that the price to be paid for a British picture should be approximately a third of its manufacturing cost.

Maxwell see two great benefits for British producers from this scheme . . . In the first place, Reciprocity "will provide the British Producer with the extra money he must get from the overseas markets if he is to escape extinction" — in other words, it will enable him to produce films sufficiently high in quality to enable him to compete with foreign film producers in the world market. In the second place, it will allow American kinema owners and their audiences to get acquainted with British pictures — and thus an outlet for British pictures will be built up in America.

It is certainly a very pleasant idea as far as the English producers are concerned. With Reciprocity, they completely avoid the necessity of establishing expensive and, almost invariably, unprofitable distributing agencies in America. They can be assured of receiving one third of their manufacturing costs back without expending an ounce of effort. Their pictures will be given, what for them, is free publicity in America — since the companies that buy their pictures will have to advertise them at their own expense.

It is difficult to see where the American companies will benefit. It is doubtful whether it matters much to them if they pay $100,000 for a British film which will probably be unacceptable to American audiences, or spend the same amount to produce a third-rate quickie in England.

Certainly, the American theatre-going public will not take very kindly to having British pictures thrust, willy-nilly, down their throats. Certainly, the Exhibitor will not welcome programmes unpopular with his audiences.

Of course, if, by some unfathomable stroke of magic, British films suddenly assume a more entertaining aspect — a different song could be sung. However, we rather feel that it's a big IF.

B.B.C. "Bought Off"

I HAVE been shocked at one aspect of the furore raised in the British Film Industry by the losses entailed due to the broadcast of the Royal Command Performance. As you doubtless are aware, this is a vaudeville show presented for the Royal family and broadcast by the British Broadcasting Commission to the general public. The Sheffield exhibitors had a meeting to protest the broadcast. The following conversation took place at the meeting: "Did we not buy the B.B.C. off two years ago?" "They have got stiffer and stiffer in their prices since then." The fact that a Government utility, ostensibly for the benefit of the public, *could* and has been "bought off" for the benefit of a private industry is amazing. The fact that Exhibitors could be so foolish as to chance alienating their audiences by so completely ignoring public sentiment in such a matter is still more surprising.

A Unique Project

"DERELICT", a five-reel feature picture which is to be shown in the West End of London shortly is an interesting experiment. Produced by a group of unemployed film artists, the entire film was cast and directed by disengaged film employees at a capital outlay of less than ten thousand dollars.

British Studio News

LONDON FILMS, Alexander Korda's company, continues in the vanguard of British Producing organizations. The new Merle Oberon Technicolor Picture, "Over The Moon" displays a very effective set, the Paris flat of 'Lord Pettcliffe', done in all-white by Lazare Meerson — curtains, carpets and fitting reflect the current vogue in interiors which has captured both Mayfair and Park Avenue. Striking contrast is provided by the brilliantly-coloured gowns of the players. . . . I am sorry I missed the fracas at Denham last week — Brian Donlevy gave Victor McLaglen a wow of a sock at the "Aurora" dance hall — McLaglen was not slow to retaliate and soon had his opponent spread-eagled over a beer-laden table — then Gracie Fields came in, armed with a tray, and won the battle by felling McLaglen with her rather-noisy but effective weapon. The whole affair was just another exciting interlude in Gracie's new 20th Century-Fox picture, "He Was Her Man" . . . All in fun, boys, all in fun! . . . Up at Sound City, Jack Hulbert and Genevieve Tobin were hard at work on the new Wainwright thriller, "Kate Plus Ten" — high spot of last week's filming was London's "Crime Street", mysterious thoroughfare in the capital — a set which reflected the elegance that has passed away from Camden Town, with the more faded and dim environs of Kensington backwaters, provided the setting for a great deal of the action, with Genevieve Tobin planning her large-scale coups round which the central theme of this story revolves . . . M-G-M British's Robert Taylor film, "A Yank at Oxford" is now completed and everyone is looking forward for its first screening — it will, without doubt, be a most interesting picture.

See Next Week's "Digest" For Announcement Of Associated Theatres' General Expansion Program.

SHOOTING THE STARS

METRO - GOLDWYN - MAYER announces plans for an elaborately produced adaptation of "THE STUDENT PRINCE", with BETTY JAYNES in the feminine lead; the principal male role will be given to one of three singers, Nelson Eddy, Allan Jones, or Gilbert Russell; LAWRENCE WEINGARTEN will produce the feature, with ROBERT Z. LEONARD in the directorial chair . . . SAMUEL GOLDWYN has signed FANNIE HURST, noted novelist, to write the story and screen play for the next big Goldwyn musical film, to be produced next year; JASCHA HEIFETZ has already been signed for a prominent role in the film, which will be released through UNITED ARTISTS . . . change in studio plans for JOHN CARRADINE has resulted in substitution of HAROLD HUBER for Carradine in "SHANGHAI DEADLINE", now in production at 20TH CENTURY-FOX; GEORGE SANDERS and DOLORES DEL RIO play the leading roles in "Shanghai Deadline" . . . ALICE BRADY has been signed for a leading role in RKO RADIO'S "THE JOY OF LOVING", which goes into production this week with IRENE DUNNE and DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, JR. in the top roles; also cast for this film, which has Jerome Kern music, are Guy Kibbee, Lucille Ball and Jean Dixon . . . LYDA ROBERTI, noted comedienne, who was recently featured in "Pick A Star" and "Nobody's Baby", yesterday was engaged as the featured comedienne and singer in "WIDE OPEN FACES", COLUMBIA'S new picture, starring JOE E. BROWN, which is scheduled for early production; KURT NEUMANN will direct . . . starring PAUL MUNI and BETTE DAVIS, WARNER BROS.' "BORDERTOWN", one of the company's biggest box-office successes of the 1934-35 season, will be reissued during the week of January 29th, it was announced last week by Gradwell L. Sears, general sales manager; an unusually strong supporting cast appears in the picture, with such sterling performers as Margaret Lindsay, Eugene Pallette, Robert Barratt and Henry O'Neill included . . . CARY GRANT and RONALD COLMAN have been signed for starring roles in UNIVERSAL productions for the 1937-38 season, according to an announcement made this week; no announcement is forthcoming as to the stories in which they will star . . . largest cast of principals of any picture now in production in Hollywood is engaged in the filming of the HAL ROACH - M-G-M feature, "MERRILY WE LIVE", co-starring CONSTANCE BENNETT and BRIAN AHERNE; supporting cast includes Billie Burke, Ann Dvorak, Marjorie Rambeau, Alan Mowbray, Bonita Granville, Tom Brown, Phillip Reed and Theodore Von Eltz . . . "NOTHING SACRED", DAVID O. SELZNICK'S Technicolor comedy, starring CAROLE LOMBARD and FREDRIC MARCH, is a hold-over at the Radio City Music Hall; film was megaphoned by WILLIAM WELLMAN, and the featured players include Charles Winniger, Walter Connolly and Maxie Rosenbloom; picture is being released through UNITED ARTISTS . . . . MICHAEL CURTIZ, advises a dispatch from the WARNER BROS.' studios at Burbank, Calif., has succeeded WILLIAM KEIGHLEY in the direction of the new Technicolor production, "THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD", because of the latter's illness; film co-stars ERROL FLYNN and OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND, and features Ian Hunter, Melville Cooper, Claude Rains, Una O'Connor and Patric Knowles . . . the JOHN M. STAHL production as announced by UNIVERSAL PICTURES, will star IRENE DUNNE, EDGAR BERGEN and CHARLIE McCARTHY, according to a report received this week; the story will be written by VINA DELMAR, author of many outstanding screen stories . . . FRANCIS LEDERER, COLUMBIA'S contract leading man, last seen in "It's All Yours", in which he played opposite Madeleine Carroll, has been cast for the lead in a new "LONE WOLF" story, shortly to be placed in production . . . MISCHA AUER, whimsical screen player, will have a leading role in "HER MASTERPIECE", soon to be produced by 20TH CENTURY-FOX with LORETTA YOUNG and TYRONE POWER in the co-stellar roles . . . TALA BIRELL has been added to the cast of RKO RADIO'S "BRINGING UP BABY", a Howard Hawks production starring KATHARINE HEPBURN; cast also includes Cary Grant in the leading male role, Charles Ruggles, Walter Catlett, Leona Roberts and Barry Fitzgerald.

Lily Pons, diminutive diva, now starred in RKO Radio's "Hitting A New High".

TORONTO THEATRES

LOEW'S—Manager Jules Bernstein — Greta Garbo and Charles Boyer in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Conquest".

TIVOLI—Manager Dan Krendel — Ronald Colman and Madeleine Carroll in David O. Selznick's "Prisoner of Zenda", a United Artists release. Also The Jones Family in "Big Business", a 20th Century-Fox picture.

UPTOWN—Manager Jack Arthur — 2nd week — Paramount's "Ebb Tide", starring Ray Milland, Oscar Homolka and Frances Farmer.

IMPERIAL—Manager Tom Daley — Eddie Cantor in "Ali Baba Goes To Town", a 20th Century-Fox picture.

SHEA'S—Manager Jerry Shea — "They Won't Forget", with Claude Rains. Also Barton MacLane and Anne Sheridan in "Wine, Women and Horses". Both Warner Bros. productions.

EGLINTON—Manager Bob Eves — M-G-M's "Big City", starring Spencer Tracy and Luise Rainer. Also "Married Before Breakfast", with Robert Young and Florence Rice, an M-G-M picture.

RADIO CITY—Manager V. Simone — 2nd week — Republic's "The Sheik Steps Out", starring Ramon Novarro. Also Joan Crawford in M-G-M's "I Live My Life".

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